

THIS IS FOR EVERY MAN WHO LICKS
HIS SHOULDER DURING SOLITARY SEX,
RUBS HIS BEARD AGAINST THE STRIPEY
DELTOID MUSCLE OR BITES HIMSELF HARD.

THIS IS FOR THE WOMAN WHO AT THE BODY'S
BUFFET TOUCHES HER BREASTS ONE AT A
TIME THEN REACHES FOR THE PLACE
SHE HAS MADE CLEAN AS MOTHER'S KITCHEN.

Masturbation should be as exciting as any
heavy date: have a drink first, lay out
some poppers, open that favorite book
to the most shameful passage because
without blessed shame nothing is
as much fun.

And please don't jump up afterwards
and rush for the washcloth like all
the relatives were on the porch
knocking, their hands hot from
casseroles and a cake with God's
name on it.

Rather lie there, catch your breath,
turn to yourself and kiss all the nimble
fingers, especially the one that has
been you-know-where, kiss the palms
with their mortal etchings and finally
kiss the backs of each hand as if
at the end of a special audience
the Pope has just said that you are
particularly blessed.

I WAS JUST SITTING

watching you open those long,
flat maps.

They were so old and you
24.

How had I found you without
even a star to guide me.

-- Ronald Koertge

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